

Niagara Priority Profiles



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To improve health and health equity, it is important to understand specific groups in the planning of programs and services. The information in these profiles will help you understand how the different conditions and systems in which people are born, grow, work, and live impact their health. They provide some comparisons of different groups and over time. As populations change, programs can adapt to meet changing needs.

These profiles were created for Niagara Region Public Health and Emergency Services, but can be used by anyone. You can use these profiles in planning and making decisions in any sector, department, or organization.

Intersectionality is the idea that people have many layers of their identity. Each person has a unique identity. That identity leads to different ways that the systems they live in benefit or harm them. Due to this, some individuals experience more health concerns than others. When you read these profiles, think about these different experiences. When planning projects, think about how you can include people with different voices and perspectives. To learn more about intersectionality, visit: [NCCDH Intersectionality and Health Equity](#)¹.

For further information, please visit:

[Government of Canada Health Inequalities Data Tool](#)²

[Public Health Ontario Health Equity Data Tool](#)³

Please note the date ranges used within these profiles vary based on the data available, and are included in the references. These Profiles were created in 2020 and updated in 2023. The intent is to update with each census cycle. For more information or if you have any concerns, please contact healthequity@niagararegion.ca.

¹ <https://nccdh.ca/resources/entry/public-health-speaks-intersectionality-and-health-equity>

² <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/health-inequalities/data-tool/index>

³ <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/data-and-analysis/health-equity>

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Niagara Priority Profiles: Linguistic Communities
Version 2

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Note:

If referencing a hardcopy of this Niagara Priority Profile, please confirm that it is the most up to date version by visiting: <https://www.niagararegion.ca/health/equity/priority-profiles.aspx>

The version number can be found at the top of this page on each profile.

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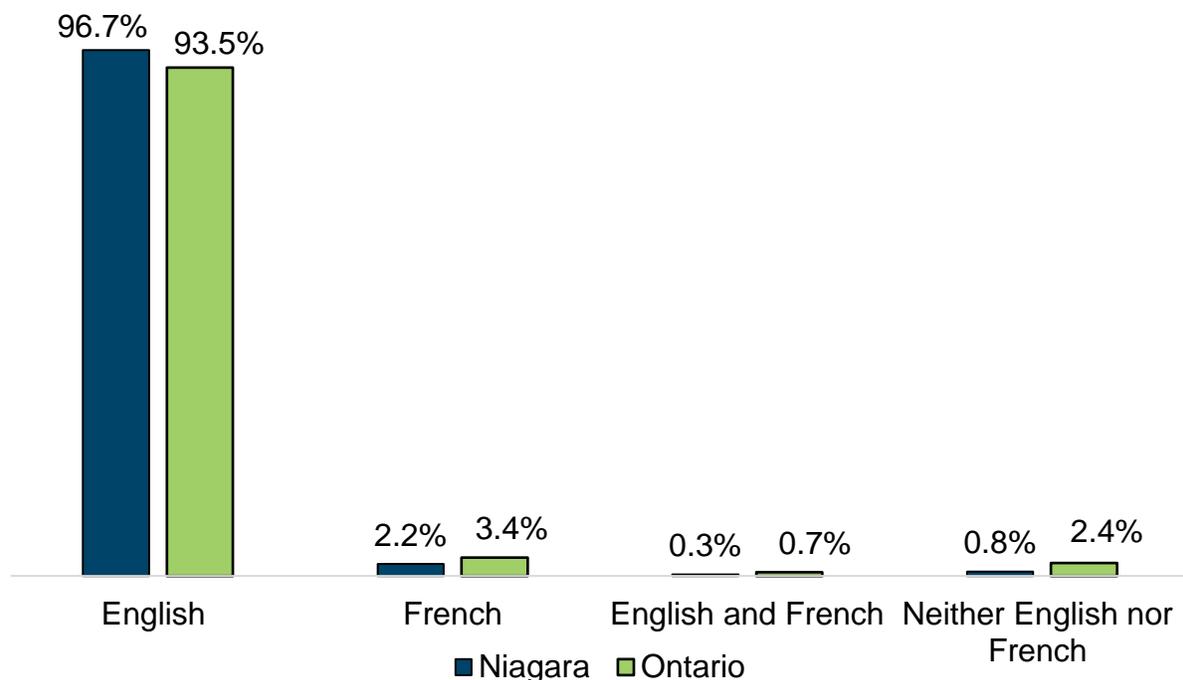


Linguistic Communities: Demographic Information

First Language Spoken

- **First official language spoken** is specified within the framework of the Official Languages Act. It refers to the first official language (i.e., English or French) spoken by the person. (1)
- Compared to Ontario, Niagara has a higher proportion of people whose first language spoken was English and a lower proportion of people whose first language spoken is neither English nor French (Figure 1)

Figure 1: First Official language spoken, Niagara versus Ontario (2021)



Data Source: Statistics Canada, Census of the Population (2021)

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Most Common Mother Tongues in Niagara

- **Mother tongue:** refers to the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood by the person at the time the data was collected. For a person who learned two languages at the same time in early childhood, the mother tongue is the language this person spoke most often at home before starting school. (1)
- In the Niagara region, 14.3% of residents (67,460) have a non-official language as their mother tongue (Table 1) (1)
 - The top 3 are as follows: Italian 13.4%; Spanish 9.7%; German 6.6% (1)
 - In the Niagara region, Niagara Falls has the highest percentage of residents with a non-official language as their mother tongue (20.6%) and Wainfleet has the lowest percentage (6.1%) (Table 1)

Table 1: Percentage of residents with a non-official language as their mother tongue (2021)

Municipality	Residents with Non-Official Language as Mother Tongue
Niagara region	14.3%
Niagara-on-the-Lake	19.1%
Niagara Falls	20.6%
St. Catharines	16.0%
Thorold	14.8%
Grimsby	13.2%
Lincoln	11.8%
Welland	9.7%
Pelham	9.3%
West Lincoln	8.1%
Port Colborne	6.9%
Fort Erie	8.3%
Wainfleet	6.1%

Data Source: Statistics Canada, Census Profiles (2021)

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Knowledge of non-official languages: refers to whether the person can conduct a conversation in a language other than English or French (1)

- The most common non-official languages spoken by residents, by municipality are:
 - Italian (within the top 3 for 11 out of the 12 municipalities) (Table 2)
 - Spanish (within the top 3 for 10 out of the 12 municipalities) (Table 2)
 - Dutch (within the top 3 for 6 out of the 12 municipalities) (Table 2)

Table 2: Top 3 non-official languages in each municipality (2021)

Municipality	Top non-official language	Second top non-official language	Third top non-official language
St. Catharines	Spanish	Italian	Arabic
Niagara Falls	Italian	Spanish	Hindi
Welland	Italian	Spanish	Polish
Niagara-on-the-Lake	German	Italian	Spanish
Grimsby	Italian	Dutch	Spanish
Lincoln	Dutch	Italian	Spanish
Fort Erie	Spanish	Italian	German
Thorold	Italian	Urdu	Spanish
Pelham	Dutch	Italian	Spanish
Port Colborne	Italian	German	Dutch
West Lincoln	Dutch	Portuguese	Italian
Wainfleet	Dutch	German	Spanish

Data Source: Statistics Canada, Census Profiles (2021)

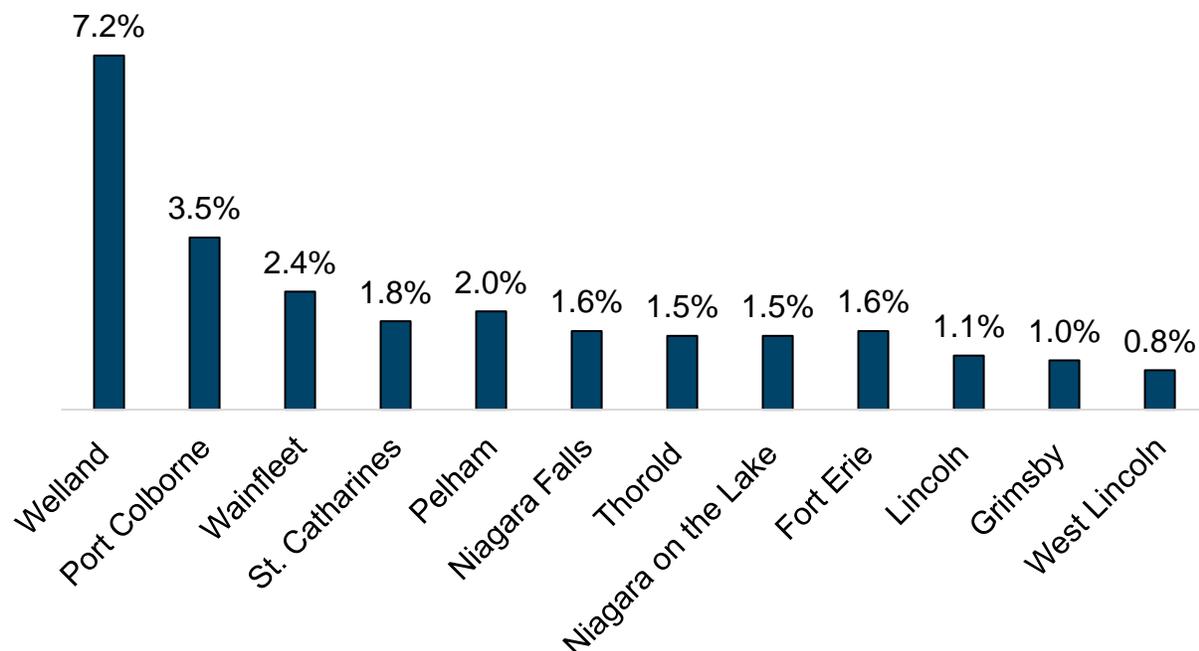
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Francophones

- At Statistics Canada there is no consensus on what Francophones should be defined as. Historically, it has been defined as peoples' mother tongue being French (2)
- In Niagara, Francophones make up 2.3% of the population (2021) (1)
- The cities of Port Colborne and Welland are designated areas under the Ontario French Language Services Act
- 43,650 residents (9.3%) in Niagara have French origin (1)
- Welland has the highest percentage of people that are Francophones (7.2%), while West Lincoln has the lowest at 0.8% (Figure 2)

Figure 2: Percentage of Francophones in each municipality (2021)



Data Source: Statistics Canada, Census Profiles (2021)

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Linguistic Communities: Social Outcomes

Language spoken impacts many health outcomes and social determinants of health. Those of various linguistic communities may face barriers to health including: a lack of access to health care services in their spoken language, a lack of further education opportunities in their spoken language, and barriers to employment due to language. These factors can lead to further impacts to income, housing, and health status.



In Canada, individuals whose first spoken language was neither English nor French are:

- 66% more likely to be unemployed, when compared to those whose first language spoken was English
- 3.7 times more likely to have not completed high school when compared to those whose first language spoken was English
- 67% more likely to have not completed university, when compared to those whose first language spoken was English
- 4.1 times more likely to not be in education or employment, as youth, when compared to those whose first language spoken was English
- And 15% less likely to rate their sense of community belonging as somewhat strong or very strong, when compared to those whose first language spoken was English

Data Source: Pan-Canadian Health Inequalities Data (3)

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References

1. Statistics Canada, Census of the Population, 2016
2. Statistics Canada (n.d). Section 1 Definitions of Ontario's French-speaking population. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-642-x/2010001/article/section1-eng.htm> accessed on 2019-07-12
3. Pan-Canadian Health Inequalities Data Tool (2017). A joint initiative of the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Pan - Canadian Public Health Network, Statistics Canada, and the Canadian Institute of Health Information. Retrieved from: <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/health-inequalities/data-tool/>